The enemy can never know the day nor the hour when the convoy will come, nor the route which it will take. The most dangerous passages can be passed at night. Routes can be selected as far as possible in water so deep that submarine mines cannot be laid. The convoy can be preceded by minesweepers or by vessels fitted with paravanes. The most valuable vessels can be placed in the safest part of the convoy. Neutrals, and other unarmed vessels, can be placed under the protection of armed vessels. The enemy submarine, instead of attacking a defenceless prey, will know that a fight is inevitable in which he may be worsted. All hope of successful surface attack would have to be dismissed at once.

Advantages of the convoy system

The adoption of the convoy system would appear to offer great opportunities for mutual support by the merchant vessels themselves, apart from the defence provided by their escorts. Instead of meeting one small gun on board one ship the enemy might be under fire from, say, ten guns, distributed among twenty ships* Each merchant ship might have depth charges, and explosive charges in addition might be towed between pairs of ships, to be exploded electrically. One or two ships with paravanes might save a line of a dozen ships from the mine danger. Special

salvage ships , . . might accompany the convoy to salve those ships which were mined or torpedoed without sinking immediately, and in any event to save the crews.

Perhaps the best commentary on the convoy system is that it is invariably adopted for our main fleet, and for our transports."